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How the Reds Brainwash

He Follows Orders With the Docility of Trained Animal COPYRIGHT

(First of two stories.)

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Communist secret police have devilishly clever techniques for bending prisoners to the evil will of the state.

This is "brainwashing," a method dominating the mind of a human being to the point where he says—and seems to believe—what his Russian captors want him to say.

This is no Hollywood third degree with rubber-hose beatings.

It is, instead, an exquisitely effective manipulation of the human mind, made efficient by experience dating back to Czarist days.

A detailing of these techniques, including subtle and gross torture, makes the skin creep.

Belief

There are some who believe (and some who doubt) that "brainwashing" has been applied to American spy plane pilot Francis Gary Powers, who goes to "trial" in Moscow Aug. 17 on espionage charges.

This week in London, L. N. Smirnov, identified as Russia's "No. 2 judge," deputy chairman of the USSR Supreme Court, denied, with a display of indignation, that pilot Powers had been "brainwashed." He said: "such methods as using lie-detector and brainwashing techniques are loathsome to our legal ideals. I can assure you that he will get the fairest possible trial."

He claimed to know nothing about why pilot Powers has been refused the right to have his own lawyers or see U. S. Embassy representatives. And then Smirnov cracked: "It would be good to wash with clean water the brains of people who suggest that pilot Powers has been brainwashed."

Whatever the facts, there seem some parallels between recent news from Moscow about pilot Powers, captured when his U-2 plane somehow came down from 70,000 feet into Russian territory last May 1, and what experts wrote as long as four years ago about communist "brainwashing" and its results.

Special Report

In 1956 two medical doctors, Lawrence E. Hinkle, Jr., and Harold G. Wolff, of New York, former Defense Department consultants, wrote a special report on "communist interrogation and indoctrination of 'enemies of the state'" for the American Medical Association. Their copyrighted analysis of communist secret police methods was printed in the AMA's "archives of neurology and psychiatry."

Experts here today say that since then there have been no major changes in the "brainwashing" techniques the two doctors described.

Russian state police, called by many names over the years, now are known as KGB, the committee for state security.

When some suspect falls under their suspicion, the gathering of evidence begins. More likely than not, when the case is complete, the suspect is arrested in the middle of the night. An alternate method is to seize him in a city not his home, to which he has been sent by his bosses.

According to Soviet Administration principle, a man arrested by the state police is not imprisoned. He is "detained."

Description

Then the "brainwashing" process begins. Here's how Drs. Hinkle and Wolff describe it:

"An almost invariable feature of the management of any important suspect under detention is a period of total isolation in a detention cell.

He is not allowed to talk to the guards or to communicate with other prisoners in any manner. . . .

"The hours and routine of the prisoner are rigidly organized. He is awakened early in the morning and given a short period to wash himself. His food is brought to him. He has a short and fixed time to eat it. He must police his own cell. At some time in the morning he usually has an exercise period.

"He is allowed to use a slop jar in his cell, but sometimes this is taken away. Then he must call

the guard and perhaps wait for hours to be taken to the latrine.

"He has nothing to do, nothing to read, and no one to talk to. Under the strictest regimen, he may have to sit or stand in his cell in a fixed position all day. He may sleep only at hours prescribed for sleep. Then he must go to bed promptly when told, and must lie in a fixed position upon his back with his hands outside the blanket. If he deviates from this position, the guard outside will awaken him and

make him resume it. The light in his cell burns constantly. He must sleep with his face constantly toward it."

Treatment

If the prisoner becomes ill, he is treated. If suicide attempts are made and thwarted, he is carefully nursed back to recovery. Then the procedure is resumed.

The two doctors continue:

"Exposed for the first time to total isolation in a KGB prison, he (the prisoner) develops a predictable group of symptoms which might almost be called a 'disease syndrome.' The guards and KGB officers are quite familiar with this. . . .

For a few hours, after arrest, they say, the prisoner may sit quietly, confused and dejected. Then he shows interest and anxiety. Some ask questions. Some make demands. Some pass thru a brief period of shouting, threatening and demanding.

"The period of anxiety, hyperactivity and apparent adjustment to the isolation routine usually continues from one to three weeks. . . . Finally, he sits and stares with a vacant expression. . . . He allows himself to become dirty and disheveled. . . . He no longer bothers with the niceties of eating. He may mix it (his food) into a mush and stuff it into his mouth like an animal. . . . The slop jar is no longer offensive. . . . He may soil himself.

Prays Aloud

"He weeps; he mutters, and he prays aloud. . . . He follows the orders of the guard with the docility of a trained animal. It usually takes from four to six weeks to produce this phenomenon in a newly-imprisoned man.

"Some prisoners may become delirious and have hallucinations."

In addition, Drs. Hinkle and Wolff report, other pressures besides isolation are applied. Guards can shorten hours of sleep, the temperature of the cell can be lowered or raised, the food ration may be changed.

"The effects of isolation, anxiety, fatigue, lack of sleep, uncomfortable temperature and chronic hunger produces," the doctors say, "disturbances of mood, attitudes and behavior in nearly all prisoners. The living organism cannot entirely withstand such assaults.

"The communists do not look upon these assaults as 'torture.'"

By this time, the prisoner usually is "conditioned."

Why?

The doctors cite the reason:

"Man is a social animal; he does not live alone. From birth to death he lives in company of his fellow man.

"When he is totally isolated, he is removed from all of the inter-personal relations which are so important to him. . . . his internal as well as his external life is disrupted."

Then, docile as an animal yearning for human contact, he is ready for questioning. And the communist interrogator, an expert whose techniques have been refined for years, is ready for him.

The "brainwashing" will now begin in earnest.

NEXT: THE INTERROGATION.